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SUBJECT: IRAN DENIES ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON AHMADINEJAD

[¶1](#). Iranian government spokesman Golanhoseyn Elham has denied reports of a December 15 assassination attempt on Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. He confirmed, however, that a Revolutionary Guardsman -- identified by Iran Daily as presidential bodyguard Hojjat Garmabdari -- and his driver, were killed in an attack by bandits during Ahmadinejad's visit to Zahedan. Elham claimed the attack was on a vehicle not part of Ahmadinejad's motorcade and not in an area Ahmadinejad was to approach at any time.

[¶2](#). Contacts and news agencies have provided various accounts of the attack, none of which can be confirmed:

-- An Iranian businessman told PolEconChief December 19 he heard Ahmadinejad had switched cars shortly before the attack and would normally have been in the targeted car. He heard all the car's occupants were killed by bullet fire.

-- An "informed source" told Farda News the vehicle was performing a security check on the route Ahmadinejad's motorcade was to take, although the bandits were unaware of the victims and only sought to steal the vehicle.

-- WorldNetDaily.com cites a Jomhuri-ye Islami report -- an extremely conservative Tehran-based paper -- that at 6:50pm the lead car in the presidential motorcade was ambushed by "armed bandits and troublemakers," killing the driver and one of Ahmadinejad's bodyguards. Ahmadinejad was not in the car at the time.

[¶3](#). COMMENT: The official denial raises questions as to why a